

CLAYTON LLEWELLYN
Evolutional Whimsy: New Drawings by Clayton Llewellyn
March 29 to June 7, 2009

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My work explores the cast-off byproducts of our progress. As the responsibility for evolution becomes our own and our technologies advance at an exponential rate, what is left by the wayside? What grows in the wake of our posthuman existence? Is it a benign form of fungal growth that holds the cure for cancer and Alzheimer's? Is it some mechanical super flu that will return us to a pre-industrialized state? Could it be that self-aware creature, growing under the sea, which waits to destroy Tokyo?

The periphery of our progress is as important as the goals and aspirations that fuel the headlong rush forward. My work turns over rocks, looks in closets, and pokes that thing slithering on the seashore. I hope to bring attention to the wonder and fear that grow at the edges of our attention.

CURATOR'S COMMENTS
Mark-Elliott Lugo
Curator, San Diego Public Library

More than thirty drawings by Clayton Llewellyn, a talented artist and popular community college art teacher whose unusual subjects and experimental techniques are changing the way drawings and drawing media are perceived in the region, are featured in a solo exhibition at the Earl & Birdie Taylor/Pacific Beach Branch Library. The works in "Evolutional Whimsy: New Drawings by Clayton Llewellyn" range from delicate and intimately scaled vignettes to major triptychs nearly nine feet in length and framed in welded steel.

Llewellyn, in his early thirties, earned a BA in painting, printmaking, and photography from San Diego State University in 2001 and an MFA in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2006. He currently teaches art-related subjects at Mira Costa College, Cuyamaca College, and Southwestern College, and has taught at UCSD Extension, San Diego State University, and City College.

Llewellyn belongs to a younger generation of artists whose members, defying art world trends, are revitalizing standards of craftsmanship and drawing. Llewellyn's previous bodies of work explored ideas relating to evolution, science fiction, bioengineering, and a melding of man and machine. In his most recent drawings, Llewellyn's focus has shifted to the detritus of man's technological progress; that is, in the artist's words, "that which falls off," "that which is left behind," and "the leaving, the left, and the found." These "mistakes," their ultimate incarnation, and their implications for the future (whether beneficial or perilous), provide ample fodder for Llewellyn. Light bulbs ooze liquid that could be syrup, blood, or semen. Mysterious blobs ferment in closets. And teeth with parachutes, jettisoned from an unspecified mishap, drift lazily downward.

One of Llewellyn's most fascinating concepts – one that he has addressed frequently in his drawings of the past few years – involves the skins of humans of the future. He envisions skin as changeable and discardable, like clothes, either because it wears out or simply because the "wearer" desires a new look. Among his concerns (revealing his sense of humor) are how it is attached (with buttons, ribbon-like ties, or zippers) and the ultimate fate of such a "cast-off." For example, is it left abandoned in a heap, to be appropriated by the less fortunate?

Llewellyn's art is elegant, yet unconventional; well-crafted, yet intelligent and provocative. Experimentation governs ideas and technique and he draws inspiration from sources ranging from popular culture to contemporary philosophy. A specialty of the artist is toning drawing papers using various unorthodox methods, including subtle rust stains left by moistened steel particles. He enjoys working in relatively poor artificial light, and likes the idea of the ring left by a bottle of beer on a sheet of drawing paper. This approach might be called "disciplined subversion." – *M. Lugo*

The Taylor/Pacific Beach Branch Library houses the flagship gallery for the San Diego Public Library system. The Llewellyn exhibition is the most recent of more than 125 museum-quality contemporary art exhibitions that have been organized by the Visual Arts Program of the San Diego Public Library since 1997. All works are for available for purchase, with a percentage

of sales supporting the Visual Art Program. For more information, please contact Library Curator Mark-Elliott Lugo at this library.